

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
1st Session

Vote No. 180

May 23, 1995, 4:54 p.m.
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BUDGET RESOLUTION/Defense Increase with Domestic Offsets

SUBJECT: Senate Concurrent Budget Resolution for fiscal years 1996-2002 . . . S. Con. Res. 13. Thurmond amendment No. 1125.

ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 40-60

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. Con. Res. 13, the fiscal year 1996 Concurrent Budget Resolution, will reduce projected spending over 7 years to balance the budget by fiscal year (FY) 2002 without increasing taxes. Savings that will accrue from lower debt service payments (an estimated \$170 billion) will be dedicated to a reserve fund, which may be used for tax reductions after enactment of laws to ensure a balanced budget. Highlights include the following: the rate of growth in Medicare will be slowed to 7.1 percent; Medicaid's rate of growth will be slowed to 5 percent and it will be transformed into a block grant program; the Commerce Department and more than 100 other Federal programs, agencies, and commissions will be eliminated; welfare and housing programs will be reformed; agriculture, energy, and transportation subsidies will be cut; foreign aid will be cut; defense spending will be cut and then allowed to increase back to its 1995 level; and Social Security will not be altered.

The Thurmond amendment would increase defense spending by \$67.9 billion over seven years, and would offset the cost by reducing domestic discretionary spending. It would also express the sense of the Senate that the Senate should waive all points of order against transferring up to \$2 billion per year from defense spending to non-defense spending, though no more than \$10 billion should be so transferred over the next 7 years.

Those favoring the amendment contended:

The first duty of Government is defending the Nation. Unfortunately, this budget resolution accepts the President's defense budget proposal for the next 7 years, which will continue the dangerous decline in the defense budget. In his recent State of the Union address, President Clinton pledged not to cut defense any further than the 35 percent reduction in real terms that has taken place since 1985. He then betrayed his words by proposing a \$5.7 billion cut (which in real terms is a \$13 billion cut) this year with additional

(See other side)

YEAS (40)			NAYS (60)			NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (37 or 69%)		Democrats (3 or 7%)	Republicans (17 or 31%)		Democrats (43 or 93%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Hutchison	Heflin	Bond	Akaka	Hollings		
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Lieberman	Brown	Baucus	Inouye		
Bennett	Kempthorne	Nunn	D'Amato	Biden	Johnston		
Burns	Kyl		DeWine	Bingaman	Kennedy		
Campbell	Lott		Domenici	Boxer	Kerrey		
Chafee	Mack		Gorton	Bradley	Kerry		
Coats	McCain		Grassley	Breaux	Kohl		
Cochran	McConnell		Gregg	Bryan	Lautenberg		
Cohen	Murkowski		Hatfield	Bumpers	Leahy		
Coverdell	Nickles		Jeffords	Byrd	Levin		
Craig	Santorum		Kassebaum	Conrad	Mikulski		
Dole	Shelby		Lugar	Daschle	Moseley-Braun		
Faircloth	Smith		Packwood	Dodd	Moynihan		
Frist	Snowe		Pressler	Dorgan	Murray		
Gramm	Stevens		Roth	Exon	Pell		
Grams	Thomas		Simpson	Feingold	Pryor		
Hatch	Thompson		Specter	Feinstein	Reid		
Helms	Thurmond			Ford	Robb		
	Warner			Glenn	Rockefeller		
				Graham	Sarbanes		
				Harkin	Simon		
					Wellstone		

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

lower spending in future years, for a total additional 10 percent reduction in defense spending. Most Republicans strongly oppose this proposal to continue gutting defense. Many Democrats want to cut more. The compromise--to accept the President's proposal, is probably the best result that can be obtained. Nevertheless, it is important that we vote on this issue, so the American people can see which Senators, of both parties, are in favor of strengthening America's defenses, and which Senators are in favor of making them even weaker.

For the past two years, President Clinton has busied himself with cutting the number of Armed Services personnel. In fact, his much ballyhooed reductions in Federal full-time employees for all practical purposes has so far resulted only in Armed Forces cuts. The President has justified this reduction-in-force by promising to provide our troops with the most modern technology available and by improving and maintaining readiness. Neither step has been taken, because the numbers just do not add up. According to the General Accounting Office, President Clinton's defense plan, even before he made the proposal for further cuts in this budget, may be underfunded by as much as \$150 billion.

A decade ago, we purchased 720 tanks a year. Today we buy none. Annual purchases of ships and aircraft have declined 80 percent and 87 percent respectively. Dozens of major weapons programs and more than a hundred smaller ones have been terminated. As the Congressional Budget Office has put it, the Pentagon has entered a "procurement holiday." This failure to modernize our forces has occurred because President Clinton has taken a holiday from the truth, refusing to acknowledge the serious damage he is doing to our Armed Forces with his deep defense cuts.

Readiness levels have also declined. Last September, three Army divisions reported readiness levels of C-3, which is the worst record since the Carter Administration. Overall readiness for active Navy aviation squadrons declined from 75 percent in 1990 to 61 percent last year. Funding shortfalls in the 2d Marine Air Wing's flying hour program resulted in 11 of 30 squadrons reporting in the two lowest readiness categories for the 4th quarter of fiscal year 1994. In short, our defense forces have been slashed, and those soldiers who are left are being poorly trained and equipped.

Senators who observe that the Cold War is over and assume from that fact that the world is now a peaceful place of bunny rabbits and butterflies need to open their eyes to the events of the past few years. The United States was engaged in a major, unanticipated land war with Iraq (which it won, but, lest Senators grow complacent, we note that Iraq has nearly completed rebuilding its forces from that war, and may well try expanding again); Iran has continued to build its military forces, and will likely soon become a nuclear power; North Korea has an extensive nuclear program, and probably already is a nuclear power, despite this Administration's efforts to stop it with a \$4 billion bribe; China is aggressively developing its military forces, and has moved through the South China sea, seizing territory from other countries in its expansionist drive; tens of thousands of nuclear weapons are still found throughout the remnants of the former Soviet empire; and numerous other smaller trouble spots exist. Perhaps some Senators may believe that all the hostilities in the world do not involve the United States; however, since the fall of the Cold War, the United States has been involved in 18 conflicts.

The active use of military power is putting a tremendous strain on the men and women in our Armed Forces. Our forces in Europe have been cut by approximately two-thirds in the past 5 years, but they have been deployed more often in those 5 years than they were in the previous 45 years. Air Force deployments have quadrupled in the last 7 years though end strengths have declined by one-third. The average soldier now spends 138 days each year away from home on extended, short notice deployments. High deployment rates, erosion in pay, little training, and less-than-modern, old equipment and weaponry have decimated morale among our troops. In the Persian Gulf war, America had 6 months to deploy forces, faced a foe without weapons of mass destruction, had easy, level terrain on which to fight, and had the support of all surrounding countries and virtually the entire world. If America gets into a war again without these advantages and with Armed Forces that have been greatly weakened since 1992, we fear it may find it is not up to the task. In both lives and money, the costs of building defense forces once a war has already started are enormous. Virtually every Defense Department and nonpartisan analyst has been warning Congress that the United States is in danger of becoming a paper tiger. Once again, with this budget, it appears that Members are ready to join President Clinton in ignoring expert opinion.

We are not. We have proposed the Thurmond amendment, which would add back \$67.9 billion over the next 7 years, and which would make an equivalent reduction in non-defense discretionary spending, to undo the damage that is proposed by this budget resolution. Over the years, defense alone has been made to shoulder the burden of deficit reduction. We urge Senators to stop this practice, by joining us in support of the Thurmond amendment.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

No matter how ominous our colleagues wish to make the Iraqis, the Chinese, the North Koreans, and other minor despots sound, they pale in comparison to the threat that was posed by the former Soviet Union in its heyday. During the height of the Cold War, the Reagan Administration went on a defense spending spree with borrowed money. On May 2, 1985, the Senate finally put a stop to the defense build up. The Senate was right to stop that spending spree in 1985, and it is even more right to insist on keeping defense spending flat in 1996 and beyond.

Huge portions of the defense budget are for the procurement of defense systems that are made for fighting another sophisticated

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military behemoth. The Seawolf submarine, for example, which was designed for strategic warfare with the Soviet Union, has technological capabilities that are simply not needed to fight any of the United States' current potential adversaries. We agree that the United States needs to have a technological edge in its weaponry, but we add that its potential adversaries are so far behind that it does not need the most advanced, and expensive, weapons systems possible to achieve that edge.

To put the United States' level of defense spending in perspective, one need only observe that the combined military budgets of Russia, Iraq, China, North Korea, Libya, Iran, Syria, and Cuba total \$95 billion annually, which is one-third of total U.S. defense spending. Tremendous amounts are spent, and tremendous amounts are wasted, not only on Cold War weaponry, but also through simple mismanagement and fraud. The Pentagon handles its budget so sloppily that each year it cannot explain how billions of dollars were spent. We cannot support our colleagues' call to increase funding for defense, which wastes billions of dollars every year, on the same budget resolution that calls for billions of dollars in cuts in education, Head Start, Medicare, Medicaid, and other needed social programs. In 1953, President Eisenhower observed: "Every gun that is fired, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. The world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children." We agree, and thus must oppose the Thurmond amendment.